

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for Scherping Game Bird Farm.

Comments will be accepted until 5:00 pm, July 2, 2002. If you have questions, feel free to contact me at 444-4720, email: mkorn@state.mt.us. All comments should be sent to: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Helena Area Resource Office, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701.

Thank you for your interest.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 E 6th Ave, PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 444-2452

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Fur Farm, Game Bird Farm, Zoo/Menagerie, Shooting Preserve

PART 1. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

Project Title: Scherping Bird Farm

Application Date: May 16, 2002

Name, Address and Phone Number: Tom and Anita Scherping, 2700 Park Drive, Helena, MT 59601, (406) 443-3651

Project Location: T10N, R1W, Sec. 17. The property is a half-acre residential location on the North Slope of Mount Helena, on the west edge of the Helena City Limits.

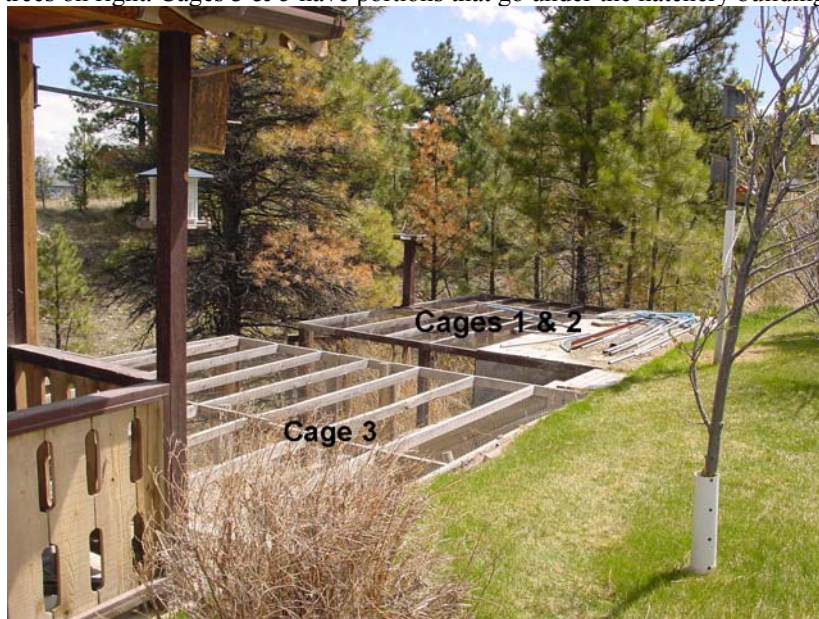
Description of Project: The applicant was previously permitted to raise game birds for approximately 12-14 years. However, they have not had a permit for the past 6-7 years. The applicant proposes to raise pheasants, chukar partridges, Hungarian partridges, and Bobwhite Quail for commercial sale. The game bird farm proposes to stock approximately 50 of each species. Applicant would purchase eggs and some chicks, raising them for resale. Most sales would be of chicks hatched on the premises. The applicant proposes to purchase eggs and chicks from a licensed hatchery: Reston Game Bird Farm in Reston, OR, which provides NPIP certified stock.

The operation consists of five cages. Two cages are built partly into the side of a hill with a hatchery and equipment building (maintenance operations, storage, incubation, and brooding) partially covering 2 other cages.



Scherping Bird Cages and hatchery building, looking south.

Cages 1 & 2 to left of stairs and cages 3 & 4 to right of stairs. Cage 4 is immediately in front of cage 3. Cage 5 is partially obscured by trees on right. Cages 3 & 5 have portions that go under the hatchery building for shelter.



Top view looking northeast.

Cages 1 & 2 are far right. Stairs going down and cage 3 visible to left of stairs.
Cages 1 & 2 are approximately 8'X8' with an additional 4'X8' roost shelter at the back along the hill.



Another top view of cages 1, 2, 3, & 4, and corner of hatchery house and cage 5.
Cages 1 & 2 have sheltered area at the back along the hill; hoses and poles are on the roof of the shelter.
Small cage 4 can be seen attached to front of cage 3 in far upper center of picture.



View from below of cages 3 & 4, showing under building shelter and roost box in cage 4.
Cage 3 is approximately 16'X16' with a 12'X8' shelter area under building.
Cage 4 is 10'X8'.



View of cage 5 looking southeast. Shows shelter for cage under hatchery building.
Cage is approximately 20'X8' with an additional 12'X8' shelter under building.

The cages are all framed with 2"X4" poles and posts. All cages are covered with 1" chicken wire on sides and top. Tops and sides are tight and secure. The sides of cages are buried in ground with 1" boards running around bottom perimeter. Doors are covered with ½" hardware cloth. Doors are secure and close tightly. All cages have shelter for birds provided. Cages 1 & 2 have roosting shelter built along hill in the back of the cages. Cages 3 & 5 have shelter and roosts built under the hatchery building. Cage 4 has a separate small roost box provided. All cages have a drip water system for birds.

PART 2. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below Or On Attached Pages
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		2.1
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		2.2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		3.1
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability &				X		

moisture						
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments

(A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided)

2.1 There is a limited potential for disease transmission from artificially propagated birds to wild birds, although the applicant is purchasing only from certified disease free stock.

2.2 Pens are located on a dry wooded gully, which eventually drains down hill toward Euclid Ave, approximately 1 mile to the north. Gully ends prior to reaching Euclid Ave.

3.1 Suitable pheasant habitat does not occur within the area of the Scherping Game Bird Farm. Any escaped birds would have minimal survival potential. Any birds that survive would have to adapt to becoming urban birds living in and around residences along west side of Helena. Consequently there is extremely limited potential of establishment of viable pheasant populations here. However, birds sold to shooting preserves and individuals may then be transported to areas with suitable pheasant habitat.

Table 2. Potential Impacts on Human Environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below Or On Attached Pages
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		6.1

7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services			X			10.1
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments

(A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided as comments.)

6.1 Purchase of feed and maintenance items will generate some profits to area businesses.

10.1 The game bird farm application processes requires an EA, inspection and review by FWP employees and contract personnel. Initial and periodic follow-up inspections will be required for game farms by an FWP game warden. There should be no other demands on government services.

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? NO

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action when alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider.

Include a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

No Action Alternative - Land use would remain the same (Rural Residential). No additional profits would be generated and no additional demands would be placed on state government.

List proposed mitigative measures (stipulations) for license: NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA: NONE

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN

Date Completed: June 5, 2002

PART 3. DECISION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS: No EIS required.

Describe public involvement, if any: None

Recommendation for license approval: _____
Wildlife Manager Date

Warden Captain Date